

A vibrant watercolor splash background in shades of yellow, orange, red, purple, and blue, positioned behind the year text.

2020

ANNUAL REPORT
VIVABILITY LTD.

A stylized logo consisting of four thick, brush-stroke-like letters: 'V', 'I', 'V', and 'A'. Each letter is a different color: purple, red, orange, and green respectively.

VIVA



Table of Contents

Our Service Charter	2
Board of Directors	3
From the Chair of The Board Andrew Bird	5
From the Chief Executive Officer Nicholas Packham	6-7
From the Chief Financial Officer David Latham	8
From the Human Resources Manager Blake Aubin	9
From the Workplace Health and Safety Manager Sean Osborn	10
From the Quality Assurance Manager Sean Osborn	11
From the Pandemic Manager Thomas Fox	12-13
From the Accommodation Manager Aishling Gilroy	16-17
From the Respite Services and Drop-in Support Manager Matthew Ferry	18-19
From the Support Coordination Manager Christine Healey	20-21
From the Viva Life Manager Monique O'Rourke	24
From the Viva Clinical Manager Kevin Walker	26-27



Vivability acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land.
We recognise and celebrate the diversity of culture, language groups and traditions
of Aboriginal people, in particular the Wiradjuri people of this area.

Nicholas Packham CEO



VIVAbility

SERVICE CHARTER

*Our purpose is to support people to live a full life, with dignity.
Our aim is to be the preferred NDIS service provider and the employer of choice.*

We commit to being:

- ✓ Respectful, honest, compassionate, and kind.
- ✓ Welcoming and inclusive. Vivability is a service where everyone belongs.
- ✓ Proactive, innovative and responsive. We want to make good things happen for people.
- ✓ Collaborative. We will work in partnership with others.

When you receive a service from Vivability, you can expect us to:

- Learn about what is important to you, and show you it matters to us too, by how we support you.
- Keep you safe.
- Give you options, and ask you to make choices.
- Be by your side. When you want us to be, when your rights are not being respected, and when something is unjust, or unfair.
- Celebrate your achievements, know and value your goals, hopes and dreams, and inspire and support you to achieve them.

You can assist by telling us if you are unhappy about something we have done, if we have not been helpful or if we have disappointed you, and work with us to make things better.

Our other policies: This Service Charter is about how Vivability works and what others can expect from us. It is our most important policy, and always applies, in addition to any other specific policy.



We acknowledge the contributions of the Vivability Directors



**Andrew Bird – Chair
Denise Young – Secretary
Clinton Blanks – Treasurer**

Margaret Shearer | Maria Smith | Steve Semmens | Annabelle Hillsdon

Photo from left to right

Andrew Bird, Margaret Shearer, Clinton Blanks, Steve Semmens, Denise Young
Absent: Maria Smith & Annabelle Hillston







From the Chair of The Board Andrew Bird

I am writing this report at a time when it looks like we have weathered the COVID-19 storm and are able to focus on a positive future, albeit in a new kind of normal. However, the landscape within which we operate changes on a weekly, if not daily basis, so we cannot assume that what works today will be appropriate tomorrow. The global pandemic has affected all facets of the community and Vivability has had to be particularly astute to the potential threat that it is posed to our community.

I would like to firstly thank our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Nick Packham and all of the management team of Vivability, for rising to the unexpected challenges faced by them and ensuring that our organisation not only survived, but thrived during these challenging times.

As a board, we have entrusted the delivery of services in a COVID-19-safe manner to the highly skilled staff of the organisation, and maintained our focus on strategic planning and governance. To this end, we have engaged an external trainer to assist both the board and managers within the organisation with corporate governance training, which has proved invaluable.

We have also devoted time as a board to updating and invigorating our strategic plan. It has proven to be a difficult task given the ever changing context; however, we believe that we have given the CEO sufficient direction to enable him to forge ahead with the continued growth of our great organisation.

Some key practical achievements of Vivability over the last year include:

1. Construction of a specialist disability accommodation (SDA) approved house for clients in Eglinton;
2. Acquisition of a vacant block of land which will be used to construct a purpose built house in conjunction with Huntington's NSW;
3. Opening of a support coordination office; and
4. Expansion and development of Viva Clinical at 73A William Street.

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that some of our service offerings have needed to be cancelled; however, other areas of the business have seen exponential growth. As such, we are in a very strong financial position and have been able to retain some reserves which can be utilised for the benefit of all stakeholders, including staff training and additional services to families.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome Annabelle Hillsdon back to the board as a director. Annabelle has previously been involved with our organisation and brings fantastic public relations and communication skills to the board.

Finally, as always, I would like to acknowledge the devotion and hard work of all members of the Vivability team for playing an integral role in ensuring that our organisation is the preeminent provider of disability services in Bathurst and surrounding areas. Here's hoping that 2021 will deliver some normality for us all.

As a board, we have entrusted the delivery of services in a COVID-19-safe manner to the highly skilled staff of the organisation, and maintained our focus on strategic planning and governance.



From the Chief Executive Officer **Nicholas Packham**

This year has proved to be a challenge for Vivability as we responded to the threat of COVID-19. Thankfully, while we addressed these challenges, we were able to continue to enjoy the support of our clients and their families, with their acceptance of the changes to the way we offer services. I am grateful for the support of our staff who have been flexible regarding the changes to their workplace, including redeployment into other areas of the business. We have been very fortunate to be able to maintain our workforce without accessing government COVID-19 subsidy programs, thanks in part to our strong financial results over the last four years.

Training and development for our staff has been a major focus this year and has occurred across all business streams, with a mix of inhouse training and the use of external training providers. From late March, training was restricted to online and small groups. Our scholarship program saw another 10 staff enrolled in the Certificate IV in Disability Services and we established a paid study leave program to support staff who are enrolled in relevant tertiary study. Vivability recognises the importance of promoting professional development and increasing the skills of our staff to ensure that they are well resourced to deliver the best services possible, to people with complex needs. The introduction of a wellness program to support our staff has been a welcome addition, and it supports our goal of being an employer of choice in the disability sector.

Demand for services continues to increase and in response to this demand we have employed additional staff, bringing our numbers to over 180 across 22 service outlets. Our commitment to creating opportunities for open employment for people living with a disability has been the catalyst for the creation of five positions, which have all been filled by former clients. We continue to refine our School Leaver

Employment Services to provide our clients with the best opportunities to develop their skills, to achieve work experience and open employment, promoting our partnerships with local businesses to further this goal.

Vivability was voted Bathurst's Favourite Business at the 2019 Carillion Business Awards with our payroll officer Taha Mashfiq winning Bathurst's Favourite Employee Award.

A block of land was purchased in January for the construction of a house to cater for people with complex care needs including those with degenerative neurological disease. This property is scheduled for completion in mid-2021 and will provide a residential option for younger people who have previously had to rely on admission to aged care facilities to access high levels of care.

In late March, in response to COVID-19, we suspended our day and weekend programs based on the recommendations from NSW Department of Health. I know that this was a particularly difficult time for our clients and their families.

In May, we launched Viva Life, an amalgamation of the Access & Recreation business streams that aims to enhance people's lives while offering one-to-one and small group training and recreational activities. This service has proved to be popular, with client numbers quickly building in the first two months of the new programs.

In June, the construction of a purpose-built robust house was completed and approved by the National Disability Insurance Agency. This specialised accommodation has enabled us to meet the needs of our residents who had previously lived in rental accommodation.

The creation of the Quality Assurance Manager role, initially in Accommodation then broadened to span all operational areas, has strengthened our commitment to



constant improvement across the organisation. In this role Sean Osborn has provided guidance for managers with the use of internal audit processes to ensure that policy and procedures are effectively implemented and areas for improvement identified and addressed.

I am grateful for the support of many local businesses throughout the year, with some notable mentions to those who donated goods to support Vivability during the early days of the pandemic, when personal protective equipment and sanitisers were in short supply. These include Jack Duggan's Irish Pub, Stone Pine Distillery & Bathurst Grange Distillery.

Vivability's financial performance this year was pleasing with increased retained earnings, allowing us to concentrate on improvements to our services and facilities as well as subsidising clients who received inadequate funding.

Next year we will increase the clinical support to our staff with the creation of a psychologist's position, and a clinical lead position to mentor staff working with people with complex support needs. These positions

will both be attached to Viva Clinical and will provide a resource not only to Vivability but to the community. A return to small group recreational activities for our clients is expected in November and will provide a level of normalcy for our clients in our changing world. The introduction of a new cloud-based human resource and payroll system will improve efficiency in these areas.

I would like to thank our directors for their ongoing commitment to Vivability, its governance and strategic development. Welcome to Annabelle Hillsdon as a director who brings valuable skills to the board, and thank you to Louise Coyte who resigned her position in October.

Thank you to our staff who demonstrate their commitment and enthusiasm as they work to assist our clients to achieve their goals. Their continued advocacy for people with a disability is impressive and I know it is valued by their clients and our organisation.

To our clients, thank you for your ongoing support and trust in us to continue to assist you to strive for and meet your goals.

Our commitment to creating opportunities for open employment for people living with a disability has been the catalyst for the creation of five positions, which have all been filled by former clients.



From the Chief Financial Officer
David Latham

VIVABILITY LIMITED
SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2020

2020 was a financial year with unprecedented challenges for many businesses, as a result of the impact of COVID-19. Government stimulus packages were offered to those businesses impacted by the lockdown to assist them in getting through the period so that their businesses would be ready to continue operating once conditions returned to normal. Unlike many businesses Vivability was fortunate enough not to need to apply for the JobKeeper subsidy as income actually increased during this period relative to the previous financial year.

Other government incentives were offered which were not tied to profitability, such as the government's cashflow boost to business, and Vivability was able to receive this support. While there has certainly been an impact on the manner in which some services are able to be offered under the COVID-19 operating restrictions, from a financial perspective it has not had a significant impact on the overall profitability of Vivability.

During the year Vivability commenced construction of a purpose-built house suitable for specialist residential accommodation. Not only does this secure the availability of top quality accommodation for clients, it also results in savings to the company relative to the cost of renting similar accommodation.

Services provided by the company during the 2020 financial year and income received from the provision of those services grew again relative to the previous year. Growth in the 2020 financial year was approximately 30%. Growth in each of the previous two financial years was greater than 20% as well.

Last year it was noted that the strong financial performance of recent years meant that Vivability was well placed to withstand any unforeseen events. The events of 2020 certainly could not have been anticipated. The cash reserves that Vivability had built up meant that when changes had to be made the appropriate action could be taken without any fear of interruption to the provision of core services to clients. This continues to be the case and the company is still in a strong financial position and able to grow its service offering with confidence into the future.

While there has certainly been an impact on the manner in which some services are able to be offered under the COVID-19 operating restrictions, from a financial perspective it has not had a significant impact on the overall profitability of Vivability.



From the Human Resources Manager **Blake Aubin**

This year Human Resources had a clear focus on the training and development of staff across the organisation. With the acknowledgement that our staff is our key resource, Vivability understands that investment into the skills and development of our staff is a valuable tool the increasing the quality of services to our clients.

This year we have again offered ten fully-funded placements for staff to complete the Certificate IV in Disability, through TAFE NSW. This program will continue annually, and it was pleasing to see the development of the first cohort of staff completing their study earlier this year.

A full training calendar included courses delivered in-house and externally and included: Behaviour support training, communication, sensory needs training, infection control, abuse & neglect workshops, first aid, finance, management training and several resilience workshops. Thankfully, we were able to proceed with online training during April, May and June with a return to small group face-to-face training in July, while adhering to social distancing.

Governance training for our staff and directors was able to occur; this included a strategic planning workshop in February for directors.

Our Employee Assistance Program is a service we offer to our staff to support well-being in both their work and personal lives. Employers may also extend the short-term psychological assistance to family members of employees. Vivability acknowledges the additional pressure on our staff due to the COVID-19 restrictions and this has been a welcomed program for staff who have used the service throughout the year.

Vivability is very pleased to have created five positions that have been made available to our former clients. These roles target the skills of our employees and are offered as non-subsidised positions at the award rates. We are hoping to continue to make an impact on open employment for people with disabilities and we will develop addition roles and work opportunities where possible.

This year has seen significant growth in staff, with the number of employees now over 180. We are committed to skilling our staff to provide the best services possible to our client. We are also committed to improving support and conditions for our staff to maintain our employer of choice status.

I would like to thank Miriam Heeney who has shared the role of Human Resources Manager with me this year. Miriam remains an integral part of the HR team and I have been grateful for her support.

Governance training for our staff and directors was able to occur; his included a strategic planning workshop in February for directors.



From the Workplace Health and Safety Manager Sean Osborn

On my appointment to the workplace health and safety (WHS) manager position in June this year, there followed a restructure to WHS at Vivability, with the WHS Committee dissolved and WHS management returned to “other agreed arrangement”, per WHS legislation.

WHS will now be reviewed quarterly by the senior manager or representative from each business location or business stream.

The senior manager from each business location, or location managers, will oversee an annual fire drill, monthly auditing and the actioning or closure of any WHS reports for their location. Some of these duties may be delegated to areas for additional focus.

Seven staff have been selected to be location managers as part of their daily roles, and will attend TAFE later this year to complete a WHS short course.

Updating of WHS systems and processes is underway for each location and these will be maintained by the relevant location manager, who will report monthly to a centralised database, which can then be used to track WHS data across locations and the business as a whole.

General staff engagement in WHS will be maintained via a mandatory agenda item at all meetings. At a minimum, all staff will therefore be present for WHS discussion and have the opportunity for input, on a quarterly basis at team meetings. Additionally, WHS remains a discussion item on staff supervision reviews.

WHS reporting forms will be created for each location with staff instructed on how to complete the forms and informed on how the issues will be resolved by the WHS Location Manager or delegate. A standardised process for auditing will also be implemented to ensure consistent monitoring and management of WHS across the organisation.

I am confident the above noted changes will see improved WHS focus and action within teams and locations, and deliver consistent, centralised reporting and monitoring of WHS across all Vivability locations, which has not previously been the case.

A standardised process for auditing will also be implemented to ensure consistent monitoring and management of WHS across the organisation.



From the Quality Assurance Manager Sean Osborn

The creation of the quality assurance position in September 2019 provided an opportunity to complete a significant revision of our client and house management systems and to undertake regular auditing of those systems.

Many of our documents and management systems were inherited from the Department of Family and Community Services, or sourced or created ad hoc by different people, based on need at the time.

Typically, problems encountered on these forms included constant duplication of content, irrelevant information, not being fit for purpose, excessive information required to complete, inability to enter data on the form, broken formatting, inconsistent form design and document layout, lack of master copies, poor links to processes for implementation and no centralised common storage point for forms.

Firstly, we addressed the editing of the documents into serviceable streamlined forms, the consolidation of the file management formats and the establishment of central storage locations and protocols, and the training of managers in their use, and from there the new system was implemented as each resident's plan fell due for renewal.

Some of the forms that were reworked had reductions of over 50% on their total page count without compromising the quality of the content, which made them significantly easier to complete and maintain.

This system review and update has produced serviceable and practical client information that is sorted in an accessible format that can be utilised for training and as an ongoing resource for staff to reference – which in the past was not possible.

Complementary to the update of management systems has been the regular auditing of our Vivability homes. The audit process involves the completion of a detailed checklist of client management systems, house operations, care, support, routines, the work and living environment and workplace health and safety.

The completed checklist is then provided to both the house and accommodation managers for actioning, feedback and supervision.

The commencement of updating and auditing of our systems occurred in conjunction with an increased focus on regularly checking all aspects of the workplace and home to ensure they are kept organised, neat, with minimal clutter and are maintained to high standards.

Training folders have now been created for each of our homes, and all staff working in the houses must complete the training steps contained therein during their first shifts. The training folders contain a checklist for new staff to complete - covering every core aspect of the role of a support worker in our homes. This checklist is marked off while using the training guide for reference to ensure the necessary content is covered.

When introducing the training folders, all current staff were taken through the content of the guide by the house managers. The core focus here was to bring about consistency in training new staff and to shore up the skills of existing staff who may not have received all the content of this training package in the past.

The combination of the system overhaul, instruction in implementation, auditing, concepts for ongoing maintenance and consistent training has brought about standardised accountability for the house managers and consistency to our accommodation service delivery.

While the auditing process has highlighted performance issues and contributed to change of management roles in the past – it has also proven to be a driver for continuous improvement and ongoing commitment to quality assurance into the future.

The year ahead will finally see the closure of outdated systems and plans and a full implementation and consolidation new systems and plans across Accommodation Services.

With the new quality assurance systems and auditing processes in place and running more autonomously, the role of the quality assurance manager will evolve to having a broader scope across VivaLife and Respite, and I look forward to working with those teams on service delivery, systems management and practical use of administration.



From the Pandemic Manager Thomas Fox

The Beginning of COVID-19

On January 25th, 2020, Australia confirmed its first COVID-19 virus case in Melbourne, Victoria, and on the same day, New South Wales confirmed three positive cases.

On March 11th, 2020, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 a pandemic; by this point Australia had begun introducing shutdown measures.

Vivability's Response to the Pandemic

The health, well-being and safety of our clients, staff, and the community are of paramount importance to our organisation.

On March 17th, 2020, Vivability sent out letters to clients, families, and staff members with information on how we would proceed in the coming months.

On March 19th, 2020, Bathurst had its first confirmed positive COVID-19 case. At this time, Vivability's response included the formation of a pandemic management team, with weekly meetings scheduled to ensure procedures were kept current. The number of instances of COVID-19, in the region, state and nation was monitored and reported to the panel weekly. Our response was adjusted according to the government's recommendations, as the situation progressed and the pandemic team members were responsible for introducing restrictions, protocols, and guidelines, as well as developing a timeline for easing restrictions, as soon as it was safe to do so. All decisions were informed by information from local government health officials and reports from the World Health Organisation.

One of the first steps taken in response to the pandemic was to address the crossover of staff into different business streams to reduce the risk of spread should we

have an instance of the virus within our organisation. Staff were assigned to an area of work and were not allowed to crossover into other areas while there were active cases within the community.

Through the peak of the pandemic lockdown period, and with our clients' and staff's best interests in mind, the decision was made to cease non-essential services and to temporarily close our main office at 16 William Street. We were fortunate to be in a position to be able to reopen after a few weeks at reduced capacity, with strict social distancing measures in place.

Although personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies were in high demand across the country during the lockdown, we were able to source sufficient PPE supplies to meet the needs of staff and clients. We continue to maintain adequate stock levels, as this is a significant part of the infection control procedure and possible cross-contamination prevention.

Additional pandemic procedures were implemented, including the introduction of health declaration forms and a QR code scanning sign-in system to support contact tracing at all premises; and any staff member or client displaying symptoms of the virus was sent for a mandatory COVID-19 test. To date, there have been over 50 staff members and approximately ten clients who have completed the COVID-19 test – with all thankfully returning negative results.

With the re-escalation of COVID-19 cases in NSW, Vivability purchased 250 re-usable face masks. These masks were distributed to all Vivability staff and enforced as mandatory to use when working with clients.

A Close Call and Effective Response

One 'close call' situation has occurred, when a staff member came into contact with an individual who had tested positive for COVID-19.



Within 30 minutes of being informed of the contact Vivability had conducted all the necessary contact tracing and had placed the effected premises into lockdown. We implemented the Isolation and Lockdown Guidelines and completed all the steps outlined in our pandemic management plan, which we had created should a case of COVID-19 occur within our organisation.

After three days of lockdown we were notified that the original case was in fact a false-positive and confirmed as a false alarm. However, this experience allowed us to evaluate our actions and make adjustments to our protocols where necessary, and so proved to be a good test run for the organisation.

Vivability Staff

The past seven months have not been easy for staff with a rapidly changing environment and the continuous implementation and review of guidelines for staff have not made their job easier.

Despite the challenges, our staff has performed admirably and put in a fantastic effort. Everyone continues to maintain the highest standards of care and demonstrate a tremendous work ethic. The staff members' efforts have not gone unnoticed, and Vivability very much appreciates their work.

Vivability Clients and Their Families/Guardians

We also recognise the difficulties that our clients and their families have faced throughout the pandemic.

We acknowledge the difficulty that clients have faced since COVID-19 began, with disruption to services and changes to the guidelines and protocols. Everyone has shown great patience and understanding.

Vivability continues to work towards maintaining everyone's health, well-being, and safety, and we thank our clients & families for their continued understanding.

A Special Thank You

Vivability would like to extend a special thanks to the businesses and organisations that have donated resources or helped us to when it became challenging to source supplies:

- Jack Duggan's Irish Pub – cleaning supplies
- Stonepine Distillery – hand sanitiser
- Bathurst Grange Distillery – hand sanitiser
- Capital Pharmacy – thermometers and PPE.

We would also thank various organisations that donated re-usable facemasks for our staff and clients.

Where Vivability Goes From Here

Vivability will continue to do our utmost to protect the health, safety, and well-being of all Vivability staff, clients, and the community.

We will continue to review the need for protocols and procedures across the organisation and hope that the world returns to normal soon.

Despite the challenges, our staff has performed admirably and put in a fantastic effort. Everyone continues to maintain the highest standards of care and demonstrate a tremendous work ethic.







From the Accommodation Manager
Aishling Gilroy

Supported Independent Living (SIL) providers were faced with many obstacles in 2020, but despite this, our accommodation services experienced ongoing success. Although growth was not a focus for this year, we welcomed five new clients to our homes. This year Vivability has set up two new houses, upgraded two homes to improved modern dwellings, and renovated two of our existing properties. We have had a continued focus on improving our property profile by modernising our homes inside and out. Our objective was to make every house look like a new, contemporary home maintained to the highest standard. In addition to increasing the number of properties in our portfolio and updating our existing dwellings, we have improved the quality of service provided to our clients and invested heavily in staff training.

Establishing the position of quality assurance manager in 2019, to monitor our systems, processes, and dwellings and communicate directly with clients, families, and employees, has seen our service reach exceptionally high standards. In particular, the implementation of systematic auditing, with requirements that exceed the standards of external auditors, has significantly raised the standard of our service. Our house managers are now able to action suggested changes drawn from the findings of the audits and related inspections. Consequently, our structures, processes, and house operations have been thoroughly revised and streamlined as we strive for ongoing quality improvements.

Recognising the disability sector's demands, and the multifaceted skill sets required to deliver our service, has prompted the delivery of targeted training in our accommodation business stream. The quality of services we provide is enhanced by our ability to liaise extensively with internal allied health professionals and external services and this year we have invested substantially in utilising these skilled professionals to provide the training needed to upskill our staff. In addition, we have reviewed the process for recruitment and induction across the organisation, as we have raised our expectations of the standard of service provided by Vivability employees. At present, it is the availability of skilled employees that limits our growth, not the demand for our services.

The need for specialist accommodation services in the Central West of New South Wales, particularly Bathurst, has become very apparent and we remain highly motivated to provide a service in the Central West that is not currently available to people with a disability. Further to this, Vivability recognises the lack of appropriate housing options available to people with Huntington's Disease in the Central West and across Australia. This knowledge has prompted us to establish a relationship with Huntington's NSW and we are now working closely with them to provide supports for people with Huntington's Disease and other neurological conditions.

The need for specialist accommodation services in the Central West of New South Wales, particularly Bathurst, has become very apparent and we remain highly motivated to provide a service in the Central West that is not currently available to people with a disability.



The availability of robust properties for people with complex needs remains in short supply in the Central West; however, we are scheduled to move into our first purpose-built Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) robust home in September 2020. This home has been designed to meet the needs of two existing accommodation clients of Vivability, with one additional vacancy for which we have fielded significant interest. Extensive consideration has been given to the clients' needs in the design of this home and in the preparation for their transition to it.

This year, we purchased a block of land for our next SDA project. SDA properties are difficult to access, and once sought, it can be challenging to find a provider with the capability to provide the specialist accommodation service required by clients. Our new SDA home will be built to platinum level and categorised as providing High Physical Support under the SDA guidelines as set by the National Disability Insurance Scheme. Internal and external access to the house will be fully accessible, and bathroom fixtures and kitchen appliances will also be accessible from seated and standing positions. The new home will include structural provisions for ceiling hoists and provide a minimum 950mm clear opening width door to all habitable rooms. This dwelling is targeted towards people with degenerating neurological conditions wishing to reside in the Central West area and it will be ready to support any assistive technology our clients may require.

In response to the pandemic, we have reviewed our practices and implemented more rigorous procedures in line with government recommendations. This work has put us in the best position to respond to an outbreak of corona virus, should one occur. Our focus was not only on hygiene practices but on the physical and emotional wellbeing of our clients and employees. Despite the difficulties, there were positives from this experience in that we have reassessed and changed the way we are delivering services.

Over the next 12 months, we will continue to look at areas where we can enhance our accommodation service. Training and development of our staff continues to be a focus across the organisation. The development of our new SDA property will be a significant project in 2021, while working with Huntington's NSW and Parkinson's NSW to upskill our staff to support people with neurological conditions in the new facility. We expect some minor growth this coming year with expressions of interest already received for some of our current vacancies.



From the Respite Services and Drop-in Support Manager **Matthew Ferry**

Vivability has over three decades of experience in delivering high quality respite care for both children and adults, and this year Respite Services and Drop-in Support has continued to grow, develop and adapt to the many changes within the disability sector and the needs of our clients. Our services extend our supports through both in-home and centre-based options, to ensure flexible and Individualised care are at the forefront of what we offer our clients and their families.

This year we have seen tremendous growth and demand in respite programs, with overwhelming interest from internal and external referrals throughout the year, in both our drop-in support and short to medium-term accommodation services.

Our goals have been to enhance these services to deliver a more specialised model and to cater for the increased demand. We achieved these goals by transferring our community access-based clients to our Viva Life team. This move gave us room to expand our teams across respite and drop-in support services, and to deliver quality and responsive support for our existing and new client bases.

With the increase with our in-home drop-in support service, we have been able to identify and assist several clients who are vulnerable and at risk. Our service has been successful in supporting and empowering our clients to make better choices and informed decisions for their wellbeing, to ensure a brighter future for them. This success also comes from the strong relationships our service has with medical, allied health and many other professional bodies, which ensure we are assisting our clients with the right pathways and professional support.

Respite Services has continued to support clients, families and carers this year with ongoing and planned short term accommodation support. This has been

essential in maintaining foster care placements which are overseen and funded by Community Services and the National Disability Insurance Agency. The expansion of our overnight teams has allowed us to give our clients in foster placements more assistance and support by hosting medium-term accommodation for clients looking for permanent accommodation options. Our service has obtained 2 modern respite homes this year, both equipped with 4 bedrooms, and we also acquired a town unit with 2 bedrooms. These additional housing options have meant we have been able to appropriately cater for the growth in demand.

This year has also seen an increased collaborative effort, with Respite Services working more closely with our Accommodation team. As a result we have successfully hosted short and medium-term accommodation for high support clients who have left the care of the Minister and moved from out of home care placements, successfully transitioning to long term supported accommodation. This is a sensitive and complex area that requires effective teamwork from all agencies involved in the client's life. Our service provided our clients with a smooth and comfortable transition, which is essential in sustaining each placement long term.

We have successfully structured our teams with a broad range of skills and ages, to cater for the diverse and unique needs of our clients. With the expansion of our Vivability allied health team, we have had further opportunity, resources and expertise to train and upskill both our staff and clients to achieve better outcomes for quality of life. While we are proud of the achievements recorded by Respite Services over the last year, we are more proud of the teamwork across all sectors of Vivability, making it a great organisation.



This year has had its challenges with the recent COVID-19 pandemic and the related restrictions have changed the way we have supported our clients and ran our business stream. Our Respite Services program flourished during this time and we were privileged that we were able to adapt and respond to our client base and new clients that needed support during these stressful times. We also had the opportunity to provide work for our staff in the Viva Life team that lost hours due to the closure of group projects.

Respite Services will continue to further develop our teams this coming year with an emphasis on resilience. The commencement of Vivability's wellness and resilience training programs, Respite Services' focus, along with that of Vivability, is to ensure our teams have a self-care plan that will help enhance their health and wellbeing, manage stress, and maintain professionalism as a support worker. While we have a great reputation for sustaining our work force, we are committed to further reduce staff turnover and maintain consistency for quality support.

Respite Services has seen an increased demand for emergency medium-term accommodation over this past year. Our goal is to streamline our emergency intake procedure and further strengthen teams of staff that are ready to respond to high support referrals. This improved response requires versatile and appropriately equipped respite venues that need to be available in a timely manner, and with this in mind, Respite Services will work this coming year to refine our own venues and secure backup options through community partnerships.

With the increased demand for overnight respite, our goal is to secure a venue that is staffed 24/7 that will run from a booking system. This project is aimed to reduce emergency and crisis situations through being able to provide further regular and planned supports for our families across the new and coming years.

We have successfully structured our teams with a broad range of skills and ages, to cater for the diverse and unique needs of our clients.



From the Support Coordination Manager **Christine Healey**

Over the past twelve months, the Vivability Support Coordination team has continued to expand, as demand for support coordination services has increased.

Our team of highly skilled support coordinators continued to build their knowledge and skills with additional training. Courses undertaken by our staff have included i) support coordination workshops, working with the National Disability Insurance Agency and the mainstream services interface, ii) complex support coordination and iii) specialist disability accommodation (SDA) for support coordinators. These courses, along with frequent monthly webinars, have ensured our team has the required skills and knowledge to support our clients.

Our Support Coordination team works collaboratively, sharing knowledge and consistently supporting and learning from each other to further benefit our clientele.

In February, we were pleased to have Sherry Hall join our Support Coordination team. Sherry has over 25 years' experience working in the disability sector and brings considerable knowledge of disability services and strong skills that have further strengthened our team.

We have continued to build professional relationships with all services providers across the Bathurst, Oberon, Blayney and Orange region, with many of our clients residing across the regional area seeking our support.

In March of this year the coronavirus pandemic, COVID-19, impacted on our services and we had to adjust to a new and demanding level of support. The National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) made

Core and Capacity Building funding more flexibly during this difficult period, allowing clients who were previously ineligible to access support coordination to be able access support coordination services in these areas.

As face to face support with our clients changed, so did the way we delivered our services. Our clients experienced difficult situations that required our team to implement new and alternate strategies to help support them within the parameters of the COVID-19 restrictions.

Through this challenging period Support Coordination was inundated with requests for services and there was an immediate need for more support coordinators to help with a surge in referrals. Fortunately, this staffing demand occurred at a time when Vivability went through a restructure in its services program due to group supports such as SLEC and Community Access ceasing to operate, which ensured these highly experienced staff were retained and relocated to Support Coordination.

Ruth Thurtell joined the Support Coordination team in March this year. Ruth has been a welcome addition to the Support Coordination team, with her clear person-centred focus and wealth of knowledge and skills.

Tayla Mayhew also joined Support Coordination and her knowledge, energy and professionalism continues to be a great asset to our team.

Our Support Coordination team has increased to a staff of six vibrant professionals all of whom have worked diligently to progress and maintain a high level of professional service to people with a disability in Bathurst and surrounding areas.



The team has had to swiftly develop a responsive plan of action to adjust to the new way of life to minimise the impact of COVID-19 on our clients. To ensure our services run smoothly we developed systems and templates that became crucial tools to assist in managing the new challenges we were faced with, as our clients' support needs became more complicated due to frequently changing circumstances. These tools allowed our team to effectively monitor our clients' changing support needs, manage their NDIS funding, and provide assistance to adjust supports as required within the everchanging NDIS guidelines of COVID-19 restrictions.

We developed a new individual support plan (ISP) and budget format that consolidates participant information, enabling the team to promptly develop participant support plans and identify assistance required. The new templates provide efficiency and allow our support coordinators to effectively plan supports and assist participants to achieve their goals.

This year, Support Coordination relocated to GT Chambers, Level 2, 73 William Street. The new office is in the centre of town, is accessible and is conveniently located in close proximity to the local NDIS office, with whom we are in continual contact as we support our participants and families.

Our new office is bright and comfortable with efficient work space for our team, and offers the luxury of a large meeting room for network and planning meetings with participants, families and service providers.

Support Coordination will continue to evolve and adapt within the ever changing environment that our country is presently experiencing, and our energetic and experienced team remains ready to support those who need our services.

Our Support Coordination team works collaboratively, sharing knowledge and consistently supporting and learning from each other to further benefit our clientele.







From the Viva Life Manager Monique O'Rourke

The 2019-2020 financial year saw many changes to Vivability, none more so than the creation of Viva Life, a restructuring of our community access and recreation support services. Whilst it is acknowledged that both streams were successful in their own right, the creation of Viva Life has streamlined these two vital areas of support, in order to sustain resources and staffing. This restructure has allowed Vivability to maintain quality community access, recreation and capacity building support to our almost 100 clients during the COVID-19 restrictions.

The restrictions have seen us revise and modify our supports to allow the continued provision of support to our clients in a safe environment, something which is of paramount importance to all of us in the Viva Life team. This provision of a safe environment for our clients has been accomplished by increasing attention to hygiene and sanitising throughout support, ensuring that all staff wear masks when interacting with clients in a confined space, taking daily temperature checks and health declarations, as well as modifying all support to being a 1:1 ratio.

Viva Life is focused on enriching our client lives, with a strong emphasis on capacity building and the maintaining of client skills. Due to COVID-19 restrictions all supports provide by the newly established Viva Life for the 2020 financial year were 1:1. This enabled our staff to concentrate on their individual client's needs and wants, which in turn saw a growth in clients skills

and abilities. This growth is a credit to the capability and adaptability of the Viva Life supports staff who were able to quickly adjust to the change in supports they provide their clients.

Training of staff has been another focus of Viva Life, to ensure our staff feel supported and provided with the knowledge and skill base to provide the high-quality level of support expected by our Vivability community. During the COVID-19 lockdown period, staff received resilience training, and relaxation/meditation training to help support them through the uncertainty of the pandemic, as well as skill building training.

The 2020-2021 financial year will see Viva Life recommence modified social and recreation groups at a 1:3 ratio, and in the very near future we would like to also be providing these modified groups as a day program.

The challenges to the wider community due to COVID-19 have been unprecedented, with uncertainty, isolation, and undue stress placed upon all of us. The Viva Life team would like to sincerely thank our clients, families, carers, staff, and all stakeholders for their patience, understanding, flexibility and time during this challenging period.

We look forward to providing support to all our clients and enriching their lives into the future.

This growth is a credit to the capability and adaptability of the Viva Life supports staff who were able to quickly adjust to the change in supports they provide their clients.





From the Viva Clinical Manager **Kevin Walker**



The Viva Clinical team has provided a range of services over the past 12 months, focusing on assisting our clients to be as independent as possible. Professional supports have been provided to clients in the areas of physiotherapy, speech pathology, occupational therapy and behaviour support. The team placed a significant focus on training throughout the year, particularly with Vivability staff. This training provided opportunities for staff to improve their knowledge and skills when working with the clients we support.

The Clinical team has experienced some growth and change over the past 12 months, with expansion of the behaviour support team and recruitment being undertaken to fill vacant occupational therapy and speech pathologist positions. Continued expansion across Vivability has seen the Viva Clinical team move into new office spaces, allowing for future growth .

This year saw the implementation of quality referral and intake processes to inform clients and their families of the services to be provided. Our team has also developed quality relationships with numerous organisations in Bathurst and the surrounding areas, including schools, community groups, businesses and other disability organisations.

Our physiotherapy service staff provided assessment, therapy interventions, exercise prescription, hydrotherapy, training, and equipment prescription to 35 NDIS participants. In addition, mentoring has been provided to a local physiotherapy business in the areas of paediatric and disability physiotherapy, which will continue into the future, ensuring improved services and access for our clients, as well as valuable networking for the Viva Clinical team.

Speech pathology services have been provided with a focus on ensuring quality, compliance and client safety within Vivability's accommodation and community access services. We hope to have the ability to provide quality speech pathology services in the coming year and into the future.

Occupational therapy assessment and intervention was completed with a range of Vivability and community clients. Particular attention was given to increasing each individual's independence in line with their goals, as well as carer and staff training around client support. The latter part of this year has seen us allocate work on contract to private occupational therapy service providers, and we hope to meet this increasing demand with quality support services provided by our team in the future.

Behaviour support services have continued to provide quality services to individuals in Bathurst and across the region. With increased demand we have recently been able to expand our team, with a third behaviour support practitioner commencing in May 2020. These services have included the development and implementation of behaviour support plans, staff training in positive behaviour support, managing actual and potential aggression (MAPA), and individual skill development.

All members of our team are provided with high quality supervision from recognised professionals within each field of service. These arrangements will continue to ensure our team maintains a high standard of professional service across all areas, while identifying any appropriate professional development opportunities.



COVID-19 has had an impact on all members of Vivability and the wider community, including our Viva Clinical team. A period of working from home allowed us to focus on alternate methods of service delivery and the implementation of safe practices for continued face-to-face services. The Viva Clinical team has implemented our own protocols around service delivery, in line with the organisation's policy and procedures. We will continue to adapt to the changing environment to ensure the safety of our team and clients, while continuing to deliver high quality services. Demand for clinical services has remained high throughout the pandemic and we aim to continue providing support in the required areas to assist people throughout this difficult time.

No doubt the coming year will have its challenges; however, as a team we are committed to maintaining our quality services for the people we support. We hope to undertake recruitment for vacant positions to complete the team, to facilitate a multi-disciplinary approach to our services. The demand for professional services within the disability sector is high, and we aim to be a preferred resource for the community by providing people with the support they require in a timely manner.

Throughout 2021 we will continue to focus on training and developing the skills of all staff working across Vivability's services.

All members of our team are provided with high quality supervision from recognised professionals within each field of service.





ior





Vivability Ltd.
16 William Street | PO Box 1404 | Bathurst NSW 2795
02 6301 9502
enquiries@vivability.org.au
ABN 75 628 890 237

www.vivability.org.au